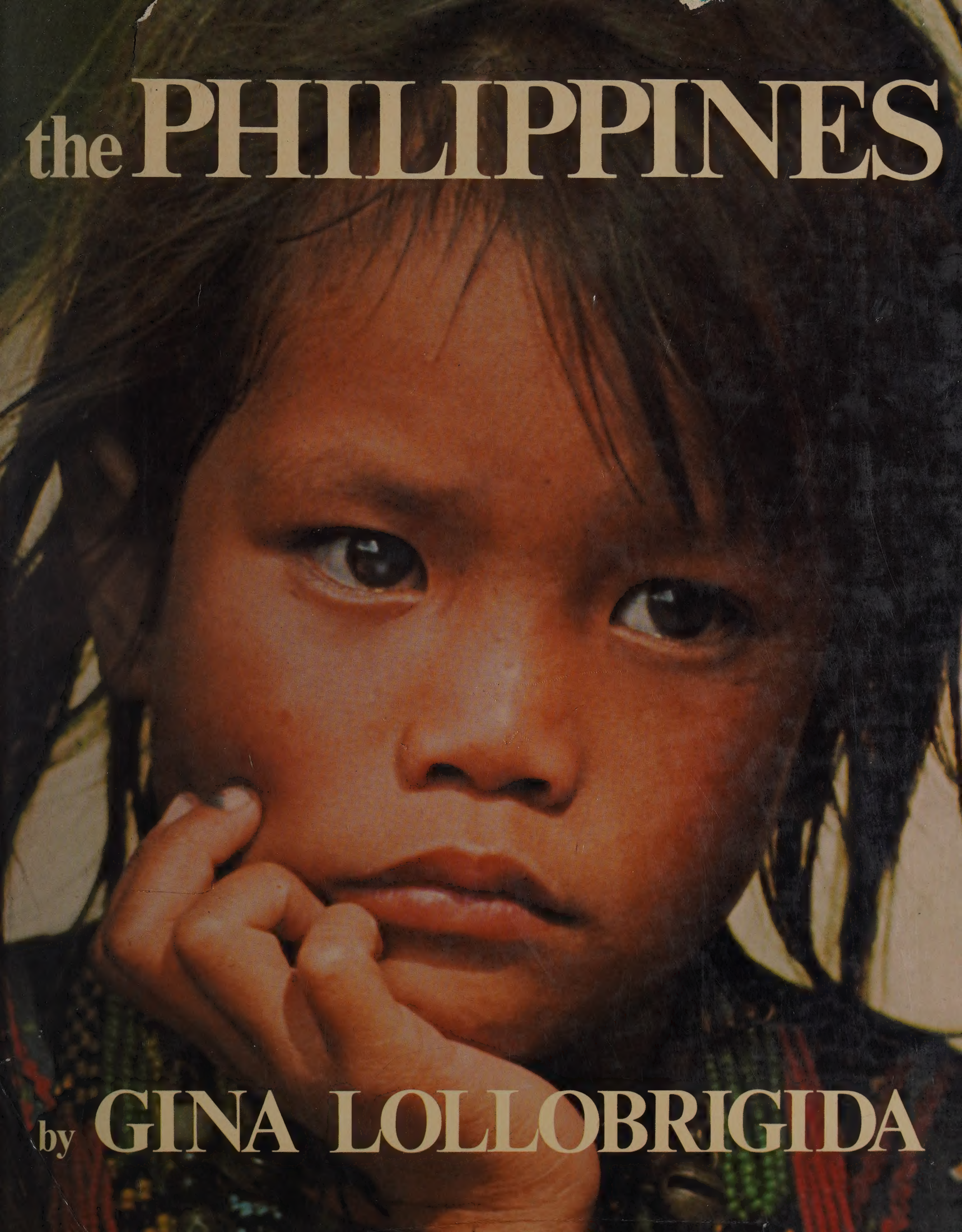
the PHILIPPINES

by GINA LOLLOBRIGIDA



Gina Lollobrigida — her name and presence — symbolizes Latin beauty the world over. Italian warmth, feminine charm, and verve have been understood and appreciated through her performances viewed on cinema and television screens in every continent.

Gina was very young, when she began acting in films. She was then studying design and singing in Rome for a career as an artist or soprano.

Fate ruled her artistic talents should be used in other directions. Gina soon became the favourite actress of famous directors such as Carol Reed, René Clair, Christian Jacques, John Huston, De Sica and many other great directors.

She played starring roles opposite Gérard Philippe, Humphrey Bogart, Burt Lancaster, Rock Hudson, Frank Sinatra and De Sica himself in some of his most memorable characterizations.

In more than 60 films, Gina played colorful folk-heroines, full of humor and warmth. She also interpreted characters from the best post-war fiction and literature.

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GINA LOLLOBRIGIDA

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TEXT
CARMEN GUERRERO NAKPIL

SARIMA

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To the people of the Philippines, with much affection and many thanks for their help and the cooperation of their government.

Gina Lollobrigida

When Ferdinand Magellan, the greatest explorer of the Western world, first glimpsed the outlines of the blue mountains of Samar in March 1521, he thought that he had found the Spice Islands, the fabled Moluccas, that had tantalized the European imagination for hundreds of years. Ever since the Crusaders had returned from the East, Europe was tormented by visions of undiscovered lands on the other side of the globe, mountains of gold, rubies and emeralds, seabeds filled with pearls, groves of pepper, nutmeg and cinnamon, that could be reached only by crossing the vast expanses of strange ocean.

It was a race among the kings, explorers, missionaries and financiers of Europe. Christopher Columbus, the Genoese in the service of the Spanish king, had discovered America 30 years earlier, though he too had been looking for the Indies. The Portuguese, Vasco da Gama, had found the Indian Ocean.

Magellan, peering through the glass of his rudimentary telescope, on the edge of the archipelago that was to be called *Filipinas,* believed that he had found glory. Instead, as fate would have it, he had stumbled on his own death. A few weeks later, his bloody corpse would be carried back from the shores of the Philippine island of Mactan, felled in battle by a native chieftain called Lapu-Lapu.

But on that glorious morning of discovery, the Europeans saw nothing more sinister than, as Magellan's chronicler Pigafetta described it, a group of brown men coming towards them in a small boat. The natives smiled broadly at the strange craft and their bearded crew, and returned shortly with presents of rice, coconut and drinking water.

Magellan and his men were exhausted, ravenous and close to despair. They had been at sea for almost two years, had crossed the Atlantic and the Pacific, losing count of the days during their interminable voyage for they had unknowingly also crossed the International Date Line, had barely survived storms, shipwreck, mutiny, disease, and starvation, reduced at one time to chewing their leather belts for sustenance, but had kept on hoping against hope that the gamble of circumnavigation would pay back the huge investment in terms of new colonies for the Spanish crown.

On that strange isle in the Pacific, they flung themselves on the ground in gratitude to Providence, planted the Cross, claimed the new lands for the Catholic king and heard a first Mass. The archipelago which a later Spanish explorer would name after the Spanish prince Philip (later King Philip II) was to be Spanish territory for 400 years and their native inhabitants known as Filipinos.

Ever since then the Philippines and the Filipinos have been a source of wonder, personal discovery, plunder and booty of every kind, scientific study, empire, glory and the politics of power for the West, and men and women, in their hundreds of thousands, would, like Magellan, hunger for the Philippine experience.

Geographically, the Philippines is as complex as its history. An archipelago of 7,107 islands (some of whom disappear at high tide) it is arranged like a delicate, filigreed bangle on a limb of the Pacific between Japan and Indonesia. Land and water are the central facts of Filipino life. The backdrop is a composite of miraculous peaks, mist and pinewood on the cordilleras with vast, green plains stretching beneath them, dripping rain forests, waterfalls and rivers which swell or shrink according to the season, mountainsides forming stupendous natural amphitheatres to emerald gulfs and bays, lakes within lakes, savannahs and volcanoes of divine beauty. Man, rain and sun have eroded the soil where forests have been cleared unintelligently, but rich, alluvial deposits in the large deltas make the land incredibly lush and fertile.

The irregular shapes of the islands which are splayed over several hundred kilometers of sea give imagery and texture to the Filipino sensibility. The seas which surround them, the Pacific Ocean, the China, Sulu and Celebes seas, define the Filipino inner and outer worlds and give Filipinos a sense of detachment. It is probably to this sense of space and isolation — for the Philippine archipelago is larger than Great Britain — that they owe their special character.

Geography attains the extra dimension of time in the Philippines. The islands of Taiwan and Borneo lie directly north and south, neatly indicating the racial past of the Filipinos. Presaging the political future are China, Indochina, Malaysia and Singapore to the west and south-west. The Pacific Ocean (the "American lake" of the political scientists), Hawaii and the U. S. West Coast to the east indicate the recently troubled present.

Luzon, the largest and main island, is sliced neatly down the center by majestic mountain ranges, the Cordilleras and the Sierra Madre. To one side lie the barren coastal plains of the Ilocos provinces which wear the ancient city of Vigan like a crown. On the other is the tobacco-thick Cagayan Valley, and below, the great central plain, the so-called "ricebowl," with the volcanic southeastern region, the Taal and Mayon volcanoes bringing up the rear.

The Visayas group between Luzon and Mindanao includes several main islands of phantasmagoric, trapezoidal shapes, like pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle that have been disarranged by cosmic forces; triangular Panay with a central lowland shaped like a saucer, the boot-shaped province of Negros with its sugar plantations, the mountainous and arid elongated island of Cebu, and to the east, Leyte and Samar, full of sensuous beauty — the first to be glimpsed by Magellan.

Mindanao to the south, the second largest island, is a world apart. Endowed with equable, typhoon-free weather, it is also culturally different. Its great forests, plains, plateaus and waterfalls provide hydroelectric power, an embarrassment of rich banana and abaca plantations, timber, gold and silver and other rich metals, most of them still buried underground. Like the Sulu archipelago still farther south and dagger-shaped Palawan island on the far west, the richest and least populated, where oil has recently been discovered, several provinces of Mindanao are Muslim in character.

Nature's largesse to the Philippine archipelago includes plants and animals that are a botanical and zoological wonder. On any sunlit plain or hillside can be found hundreds of species of flowering plants, most of them named after the emotion of love, the diminutive *amor seco* (dry love), pink and prickly, the *cadena de amor* (chain of love) which twines its tenuously pink tendrils around the twigs and trunks of larger plants, the *dama de noche* (lady of the night) whose white flowers exude a heady fragrance.

There are a thousand different varieties of ferns alone, from huge, broad-leaved monsters that look as if they might have been transplanted from a brontosaurian age, to tiny, ethereal maiden's hair fern, and about 800 species of orchids, myriads of them still unnamed, from purple and lilac to speckled brown, green and shimmering white, grow in airy sprays in sun, shade or chiaroscuro. Forests of ironwood and mahogany which once went into the building of Spanish galleons and now are made into world-renowned quality furniture cover about one-half of the land area.

In this botanical paradise sing 500 kinds of birds, most of them wearing brilliant tropical plumage and ranging from the large, monkey-eating eagles that are as fierce as lions, to pheasants with shining wings the color of molten gold, tiny green parrots with crimson beaks and all manner of quail, cuckoos and doves. There are 700 types of butterflies, each a lepidopterist's delight, many varieties of squirrels and lemurs and several species of the national animal, the carabao or buffalo.

Geologically speaking, the Philippine archipelago had a romantic beginning. At the end of the last Ice Age (from 11 to 16 million years ago) when the waters that now cover the Sunda Shelf around Indonesia began to rise, a group of peaks — the archipelago — was marooned on the swirling waves of the China Sea. The Philippines has since been marooned in many other ways.

That prehistoric isolation caused it to remain, unlike other Malay countries, untouched by the great Hindu empire of Sri-Vijaya which ruled from Sumatra between 700 and 1300 A.D. It also largely eluded the attentions of the powerful commercial empire of the Madjapahit of Java in the 14th century. Despite political isolation, unmistakable racial, cultural and commercial ties flourished. The Philippines has always shared with other countries of Southeast Asia, a common linguistic root (Malayo-Polynesian), a homogeneity of racial types and a basic social organization, the small village, held together by kinsmen, family elders and unwritten custom.

The earliest inhabitants of the archipelago were small Negroid nomads — now almost extinct — and as unrelated to the country's racial mainstream as the Ainus of Japan or the Amerindians are to the modern populations of Japan and North America.

Present-day Filipinos are descendants of Malays believed to have traveled from what is now South China through Sumatra and Borneo and Malaysia in succeeding waves of migration over a span of several centuries. These early Malays were excellent seafarers and they crossed uncharted seas in large boats called *balangay* whose name the smallest Filipino political unit, the *barangay,* still carries to this day.

The Philippine islands must always have seemed too distant from the Malay power centers and too fragmented to afford any effective consolidation. Archipelagos are, in any case, hard to govern and harder to unify.

The Philippines negotiated both problems with partial success in the 16th century. Common suffering under the Spanish regime — which was not without its blessings, the Christian religion and an early and relatively rapid Westernization — united the Filipinos further. They first began to think of themselves as Filipinos belonging to one nation during the agitation which led to the Philippine Revolution against Spain in 1896 and the Philippine-American War of 1898.

At the turn of the 20th century, on May 1, 1899, while the American and Spanish fleets confronted each other in a prearranged mock battle in Manila Bay, two other squadrons, the German Kaiser's and His British Majesty's, and two other warships awaited the outcome for reasons of their own. Simultaneously the Philippines' revolutionary army which had already driven Spanish forces from most of the country and had successfully laid seige to the capital was prevented from taking part in the surrender of Manila by the Americans who had been posing as their allies. The day, the country and the next Philippines half-century went to the Americans.

Despite its long history and ancient culture, the Philippines is a young state which attained its independence only in 1946 with the end of the American regime.

The first, strongest and most ineluctable institution in the Philippines is the family.

His family is the Filipino's religion, system of government, school, bank, hospital and social security system. He goes to his relatives for material and moral support, for entertainment and heart balm. The family is his philosophy of life.

Every Filipino is said to have 300 relatives, which explains everything from a national proneness to nepotism to the profligacy of town fiestas. A couple of generations ago it was not uncommon for a couple to raise twelve or fifteen children. Today statistics say that the average number of children in every family is six — four more than the ideal pursued by the new Population Commission.

Like most developing countries, the Philippines has an extremely young population. A 16-year-old is classified in the "older half" of the population since 45 per cent are 15 and below. On the other hand only three per cent are 65 years old or over. This means that almost one-half of the total number of Filipinos are non-working dependents. The grimness of coping with the needs of 20 million children makes both the family system and formal government a treadmill.

Because the family dominates life, both government and the churches try to approximate the methods and techniques of paternal and filial ties. Priests, nuns, ministers and *imam* enjoy an avuncular position and exert a great deal of influence over their respective religious flocks. The Roman Catholic Church, the inheritor of the wealth of the Spanish colonial church, is still one of the richest landowners and entrepreneurs (schools, banks, hotels, tourist agencies) in the Philippine Republic.

Political life at the grassroots is almost Sicilian in nature with the all-powerful "godfather" as both *seigneur* and parent to hundreds and thousands of people in his barrio or town. In great part, the corrupt system of political patronage which flourished during prolonged periods in the century's history stems from this peculiar institution.

There is no lack of modern, depersonalized agencies however. The school system — started by the Americans in 1901 — absorbs almost one-third of the population. The regular process consists of a first enrolment at the age of seven, six years of free primary school (after which about 54 per cent usually drop out for economic reasons), four years of fee-paying high school in public or private academies, four to eight years (as in the medical course) in college and two more years of graduate school. Incidentally, there are more women students at the college, university and post-graduate level than men.

More than one-third of the national budget goes to education, but it is worth it, for the Philippines has a literacy rate of 83 per cent (the highest in Asia with the exception of Japan) which rises sharply to 98 per cent in Metro Manila. New reforms have made school curricula bi-lingual and job-oriented and therefore more responsive to the needs of economic development.

Philippine banks are probably the most modern institutions in the Philippine Republic. There are 1,762 banking offices (including commercial, rural, development, savings banks and their branches), 14 investment houses, 204 finance companies, 148 private insurance companies and uncounted pawnshops — most of which operate with a high degree of managerial expertise.

English-speaking, foreign-trained Filipino managers are prized all over Asia and command high salaries in the neighboring capitals. There are more than half a million registered business establishments, 68 per cent as wholesale and retail outlets, 12 per cent in manufacturing (from wooden handicrafts to electronic appliances) and the rest in transport and in services.

The Filipinos' politics can be summed up in one word: humanism. Filipinos are convinced that the roots of democracy, good government and the common welfare are fed by love for one's fellowmen. Constitutional authoritarianism, a doctrine declared by President Marcos in September 1972, is a political innovation that can be understood only in Filipino terms. Despite the influence of the French Revolution on the intellectuals and revolutionaries of 1896, modern political ideas of democracy came to the present generation of Filipinos "in American dress."

Filipinos learned their civics from books about Jefferson, Franklin, Washington and Lincoln — all disciples of John Locke. Till Marcos, the Filipino understanding of democracy and freedom was completely American and therefore Anglo-Saxon. The constitutions of 1935 and 1972 were based on a bill of rights very much like that in the American constitution and provided for the same checks and balances, separation of powers and serious limitations to governmental authority which stood the American states and the British aristocracy, in their time, in good stead.

But the theory that liberty can exist only when government authority is curbed, proved inapplicable to Philippine conditions under the independent Philippine Republic. Social anarchy, corruption and government impotence aggravated by active dissidence from the Right, the Left and the studentry, actually endangered the state.

The revolution worked by President Marcos is based on the theory that before authority can be limited it must exist. The vision of "liberty without the grace of human equality, freedom without the discipline of answerability," in the words of a Filipino scholar, had to be substituted for a collective will under a strong and capable government which had to be above the hamstringing of Anglo-Saxon liberalism if it was to promote the common well-being.

An economic upsurge after 1973 led to rapid and important advances in the fields of trade, industry and finance. Until the Middle East oil embargo blunted that ascent by doubling the oil bill, the Philippines had an economic growth rate of 10 per cent while its dollar reserves rose to a peak of $ 1.2 billion in 1974. Stockmarket trading is vigorous and the credit rating at the IMF and the World Bank so high that the Philippines has a surfeit of creditor banks waiting to finance its many urban, agricultural and social-improvement projects. Through careful management the country's fiscal experts have succeeded in bringing down inflation from more than 40 per cent in 1974 to between 10 per cent and 20 per cent in 1975.

Land reform which, in other parts of the world, led to cruelly ironic situations of underproduction and social dislocation, went on slowly but surely in the Philippines and, in just a couple of years, conferred ownership or leasehold rights on one million farmers and led to a self-sufficiency in rice and an enormously impressive rise in both traditional and new exports to old and new trading partners. A brisk climate of business enterprise prevails.

In the Philippines more than half of the land is cultivated and planted to food and export crops, with rice, sugar, coconuts, abaca and tobacco at the top of the list. Fruit production also grew by more than 200 per cent in the last ten years, and bananas, the oldest edible crop, are the top dollar earner. Tobacco production also made a spectacular leap in a little over a decade and, as compensation for the higher cost of crude oil, there has been an upswing in the demand for the country's natural fibers. Manila hemp or abaca is now exported not only as the famous Manila rope but as component in a dozen modern products from teabag filters to banknotes.

Although it is famous for its handcrafted goods, the Philippines is actively engaged in industry. Factories producing chemicals, wood, cane, cork, electrical appliances and transport equipment lead all the rest. Copper ore (the world's 7th largest output), cement, gold, silver and nickel also bring in a great deal of foreign exchange.

Filipinos export a vast amount of Philippine mahogany and other hardwoods which provide valuable construction material at home and abroad, pinewood, rattan and bamboo, and mangrove palm from the swamps. Logging and plywood processing alone provide livelihood to half a million Filipinos.

Fishing is the year-round vocation, occupation, and principal means of livelihood for a majority of Filipinos. It is easy to understand why, for there are over 2,000 species of fish and, although coastal and inshore waters are assiduously worked, the vast open seas around the islands are still relatively untapped. The Sulu Sea alone provides 48 per cent of the fish caught in the Philippines, but in Luzon fresh-water ponds of delicious milkfish and prawns and other table delicacies are a traditional enterprise.

Filipinos are proud of the progress their government has made in the field of international relations over a period that began ten years ago. Accelerating very rapidly in the last two, foreign policy changed dramatically from an almost neurotic, compulsive absorption in the United States to a mature, open-minded, hard-nosed pragmatism. Diplomatic relations were begun with several countries whose existence the Philippine Republic had not even acknowledged for two decades, in deference to American participation in the Cold War.

Formal diplomatic relations were opened and treaties of friendship, trade and cultural exchange signed with China (thereby accomplishing the difficult step of severance with Nationalist China, hundreds of thousands of whose citizens live in the Philippines) in June 1975, with Cuba in August 1975, with the Eastern European countries of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany a little earlier and with the Soviet Union in June 1976. Clinically and dispassionately executed, these diplomatic coups aroused worldwide interest.

The Philippine "opening to the left" was accompanied by determined and singularly successful efforts to identify the country with the Third World and to achieve full and active membership in its arrangements, problems and forums. The ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) pact with Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand — long a frustration of several Filipino presidents — has been finalized. The UNCTAD conference in Manila in 1976 and the Manila Declaration have cast the country in a new role as spokesman of the Third World.

Closer rapport with the Muslim countries of the Middle East, with Egypt, Algiers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, is also a unique departure from a previous narrowness of vision. It gave the Philippines the longed-for status that its large Muslim population deserved, and opened up, for all Filipinos, a new world of cultural, political and economic experience.

Today, there are 42 million Filipinos and they are increasing at a prodigious rate. They are typical Malays, taller and fairer than Indonesians but, like them, lithe, tanned, dark-eyed and blessed with devastating smiles. Quick-witted and charming, they have a natural poise. The women are famous for a beauty that they owe more to a certain grace of form and figure than to their velvet skin, lustrous black hair and almond-shaped eyes.

About nine-tenths of Filipinos are Westernized lowlanders, relatively homogenized not only by a common racial heritage but also by the accoutrements of modernization. Just the same, they have certain shades of regional difference which baffle many foreigners.

President Ferdinand E. Marcos and Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos are an example of regional harmony. When Filipinos embark on any enterprise they ensure its success by choosing participants from different regions. President Marcos is an Ilocano from northern Luzon and Mrs. Marcos a Visayan from Leyte, therefore according to the Filipino tribal horoscope, they are perfect for each other and for the country, one being thrifty, cautious and strong, the other ebullient and light-hearted, and together, they embody all the cultural virtues and attract all the political support.

The most common Filipino conversational gambit is: "Where do you come from?" The reply, usually calculated for maximum effect, includes, in addition to one's place of birth, those of father, mother, grandparents and perhaps still other ascendants. This form of first exchange, more than a pleasantry, is designed to get things straight right away and avoid making tactless behavioral errors. For Filipino identity hinges on regional characteristics.

Even the most sophisticated Filipinos still operate according to tribal undertones. The Tagalog of Luzon are the least clannish, although they are confined in great densities around Manila and the surrounding provinces. The Spanish *conquistadores* of the 16th century said that they were "the fiercest and the whitest," by which they probably meant the Tagalog's political aggressiveness. Today they think of themselves as the most industrialized and modernized Filipinos and are only too aware of their string of successes. As natives of the chief and ancient city of Maynila, they were the most exposed to Westernization and were in the best position to plan and mount the Philippine Revolution against Spain, start the Philippine-American War and bear the brunt of the struggle for independence from America.

Northern Luzon's barren coastal plains produced the Ilocanos, smaller, tougher and grittier than most Filipinos. They responded to the challenge of their environment by breaking through their enclosed societies and became famous for a sense of duty and adventure. Today they are the most numerous migrants.

The range of tribal differences is stupendous. The Pampangos, also of Luzon, are specialists in the good life and have perfected a tremendously enticing cuisine. The Bicolanos at the tailend of Luzon are piquant in diet and temperament and as sultry, lusty and alluring as their volcanoes.

The Cebuanos are the Ilocanos of the south, penny-wise, work-obsessed, afflicted with lemming-like rushes to other parts, mostly the cities of Mindanao or Hawaii. The eastern Visayans, the Waray of Leyte and Samar, are typical southsea islanders, languid, cordial and much given to pleasures of every sort. In the western Visayas, sugar money has given the southern temperament sophistication, expensive tastes and managerial expertise. The people of Iloilo and Negros are great gamblers and when they are not underpaid day-workers, are extravagant and lordly industrialists.

For most Filipinos, there is always something strange and unfamiliar lurking on the edge of every new relationship with another Filipino from another region, and rightly so, for apart from the eight main lowland groups (who, of course, speak languages different from the Tagalog-based national language of Pilipino) there are no less than 60 minority tribes (about 10 per cent of the total population) ranging from the Muslim Maranao who number almost half a million to the Tasaday who are only 28.

Luzon alone has seven Igorot tribes based in colorful villages perched on the Cordilleras who were never conquered, colonized or otherwise laid waste by "progress," in addition to eight others, a few of which live only a few kilometers to the north of Metro Manila, who have retained their pre-Spanish way of life to this day.

There are seven other tribes in the smallish island of Mindoro southwest of Luzon and seven others, all culturally and linguistically different, in the exotic garden island of Palawan. These small ethno-linguistic groups have been called "the original Filipinos" but they are by no means representative of the majority of the population. They are, rather, vestiges or antiquities in the museum of man that is the Philippines.

The largest number of cultural minorities is to be found in Mindanao and Sulu. The Bukidnon (literally, forest dwellers) for instance are a large tribe of people, "of good stature and graceful build, affable and frank, clever and polished," according to the first Spanish friar who observed them in the 19th century. Their women are distinguished as much by their decorum as by the bangles, beads and cascabels they wear. The Bukidnon are themselves divided into three sub-tribes.

Other examples are the Manobo of the Agusan Valley and the Tiruray who live in southwestern Mindanao. The latter are the natural enemies of the Muslim Maguindanao, a sister tribe with whom they have fought many small wars. The T'Boli of southern Cotabato have preserved their own separate identity and culture for centuries by means of a loosely structured but rigidly-held society. They are slight and fragile-looking and, being thoroughly Malay with no other racial admixture, strikingly handsome. They live among lakes and mountain springs, are just emerging into the agricultural stage and adorn themselves with tattooing, exquisite jewelry and cosmetic effects as modern-looking as next month's issue of Vogue magazine.

By far the smallest of the tribes and, for the anthropologists of the world, the most interesting, are the Tasaday who were discovered by Filipinos themselves only five years ago. Isolated from the rest of the world for almost a thousand years, the Tasaday live in caves in the rain forests of Cotabato in what was till recently their own Stone Age. They never hunt or plant but simply gather food, tiny crabs, frogs, roots and fruit which are in abundant supply near their caves. They can make fire with a fire drill but do not often do so, for they prefer to enjoy their unlimited leisure, playing games, swimming in the streams, swinging on vines, calling to birds, pondering a new flower (they know more than 200 plants by name), pursuing a butterfly or singing ballads of their own invention. They are true children of nature, warm and happy, recalling everyone's lost paradise, and have no words for *anger, weapon or hatred.*

The most politically important of the minority tribes are the Muslims of the Sulu archipelago which all by itself has five hundred islands and extends from the western tip of Mindanao to the northwest coast of Borneo. There are three main cultural-linguistic groups here and in Zamboanga: the Taosug who are farmers, landowners and tradesmen, the Samal fishmongers and the Badjao or sea gypsies.

The Taosug are believed to be the indigenous population of Sulu who came from Johore late in the 14th century. They are hot-blooded, uncompromising and fiercely proud of their aristocratic origins. The Samal who came later belong to the same physical type but are treated as social inferiors. At the bottom rung of this caste system are the Badjao who live in boathouses in the open sea. They have long, narrow faces with high cheekbones and fine noses, are land-sick away from their boats and thus, are the most ethnically interesting. They trace their origins and their nomadism to a curious myth about a sultan who coveted and wed his own sister.

Six out of seven Filipinos live in 30,000 barrios or villages scattered all over the country. Filipino barrios are an enchainement of tiny cottages, built on stilts, with wide windows in the immemorial Malay style, strung along a single road.

Every house has a verandah, banked with potted ferns of flowering plants, and a clean-swept yard below, the regular haunt of wiry chickens, assorted mongrel dogs, a goat, a piglet or sow. The main room which doubles disarmingly as the sitting, dining and sleeping quarters may display a flutter of a pink curtain, an enlarged family photograph, a polychrome print of the Sacred Heart and, enthroned nearby on a shelf covered with a crocheted cloth, a transistor radio.

There are masses of children everywhere, a profusion of overhung fruit trees and hedges, somewhere nearby a creek that trickles gently among the women doing the day's washing. A couple of general stores called *sari-sari* provides the oddments and basics of daily living, tins of milk and sardine, bars of soap, rope, kerosene for lamps and stoves.

Barrios have a noisy, friendly, open atmosphere, for Filipinos do not share the Anglo-Saxon passion for privacy and conduct their lives like a permanent public exhibition. The laughter of children mixes with the barking of dogs, the coca-cola radio commercials and the occasional brawl at the corner store. But life is more rigid and orderly than it seems for it is hemmed in by a framework of custom, tradition and familial loyalty it would be folly to defy.

Perhaps that is why there are more than three million Filipinos who migrate annually out of their barrios, almost half of them between the ages of 15 and 29 and including more women than men. They move out in search of a more exciting life, better jobs and higher education or a chance to take a crack at the world beyond the dusty fringes of the last bus stop.

Most of the migrants come from the arid areas of Northern Luzon and the crowded islands of the Visayas. They flow in migratory waves, much like their Malay ancestors, to the cities, specially Manila, as well as to the frontier areas of Mindanao and Occidental Mindoro and as far as their private dreamland in Hawaii and the U. S. West Coast.

The population drain is such that some parts of the hinterlands in the mountain provinces, northern Mindanao, the Visayas and Cagayan are inhabited only by very young and very old people, each awaiting his respective departure.

There is migration out of towns and cities, too, for town life and, by extension, city life does not sit well for long. Filipinos do not make good urbanites (in spite of the fact that 26 per cent of them are just that). They are too undisciplined, inquisitive, friendly and garrulous. Instead of becoming urbanized, the rural migrants have, in fact, often transformed the cities, including large parts of Metro Manila, into conglomerations of villages. The *barangay,* with their characteristic festivals, attitudes, improvident and informal lifestyles, radiate everywhere through otherwise businesslike Manila, like ramifications of the countryside.

Except for old towns like Lipa in Batangas, Jaro in Iloilo, Vigan and Zamboanga where narrow medieval streets lined with massive stone walls, carved doors and grillwork remain as magnificent reminders of ancient townships, Filipino urban centers tend to make their uneasy compromises between barrio and town in surroundings crammed with gasoline stations, low couture and pseudo-California ranchhouses. There are many old-fashioned, charming townsites, however, with houses, squares, monuments and churches, all gently crumbling and dilapidated but still in use.

Despite the contrasts between town and country, northern Luzon and southern Mindanao, Maranao and Bicolanos, there are more common traits than dissimilarities among Filipinos. There is a cultural and racial unity which transcends the little differences of language, local custom or cuisine. Despite the diversity, ambiguity and paradox of the sixty-odd tribes, a single streak is discernible which can be called the Filipino character.

What the majority of Filipinos have in common are the peculiar imagination, toughness and resiliency which nature and history have given them. They are generous because their land is prodigal with its gifts, childlike because of their long colonial infancy. They are artistic and exuberant in the impermanent way of a butterfly's wing or an orchid bloom, easily hurt, hypersensitive and quick to take offense. At the same time, Filipinos have a natural sophistication because for thousands of years, survival depended on their capacity to adopt, absorb and digest foreign cultures. In brief, Filipinos, by and large, are everything human beings should be.

Carmen Guerrero Nakpil

PHOTOGRAPHS

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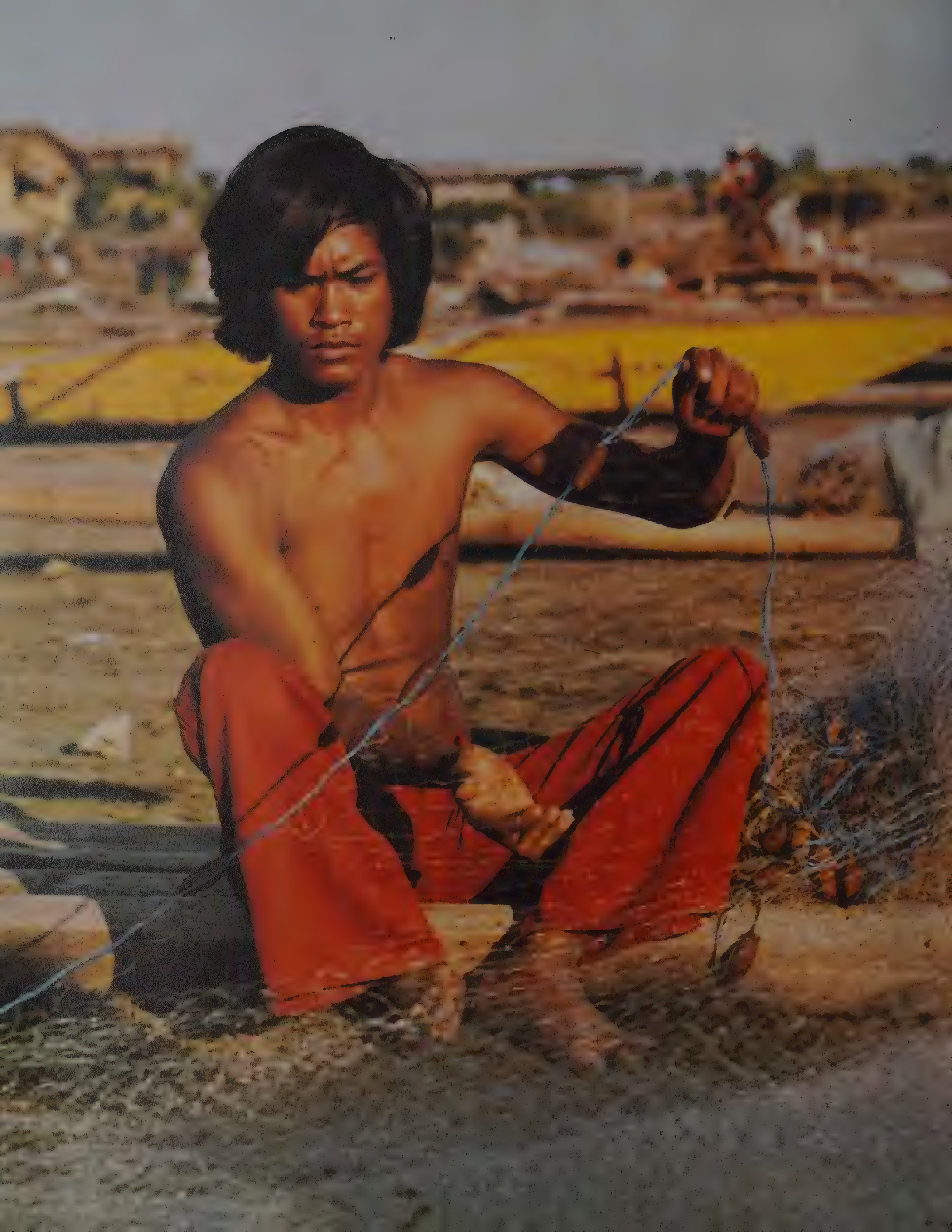

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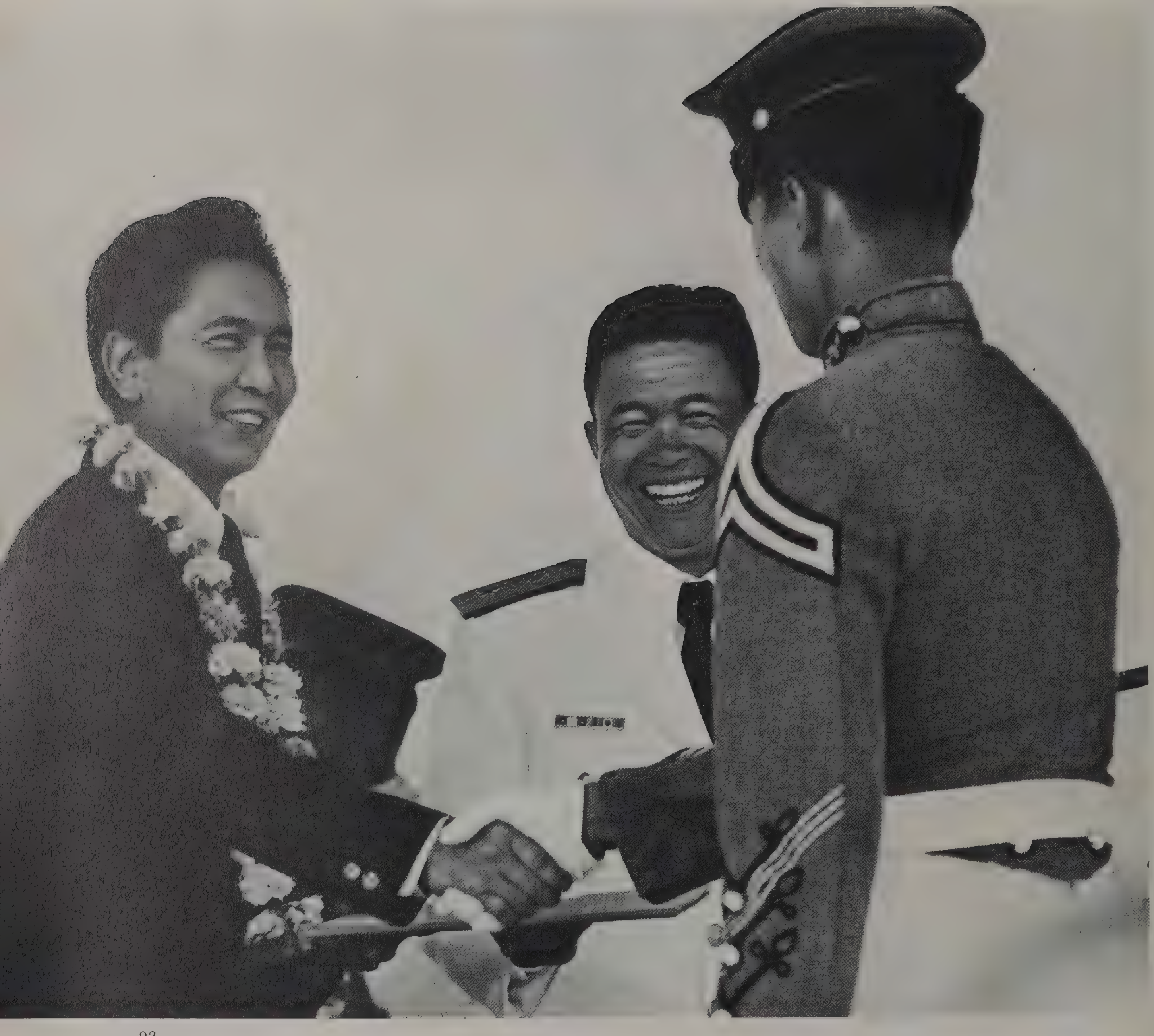

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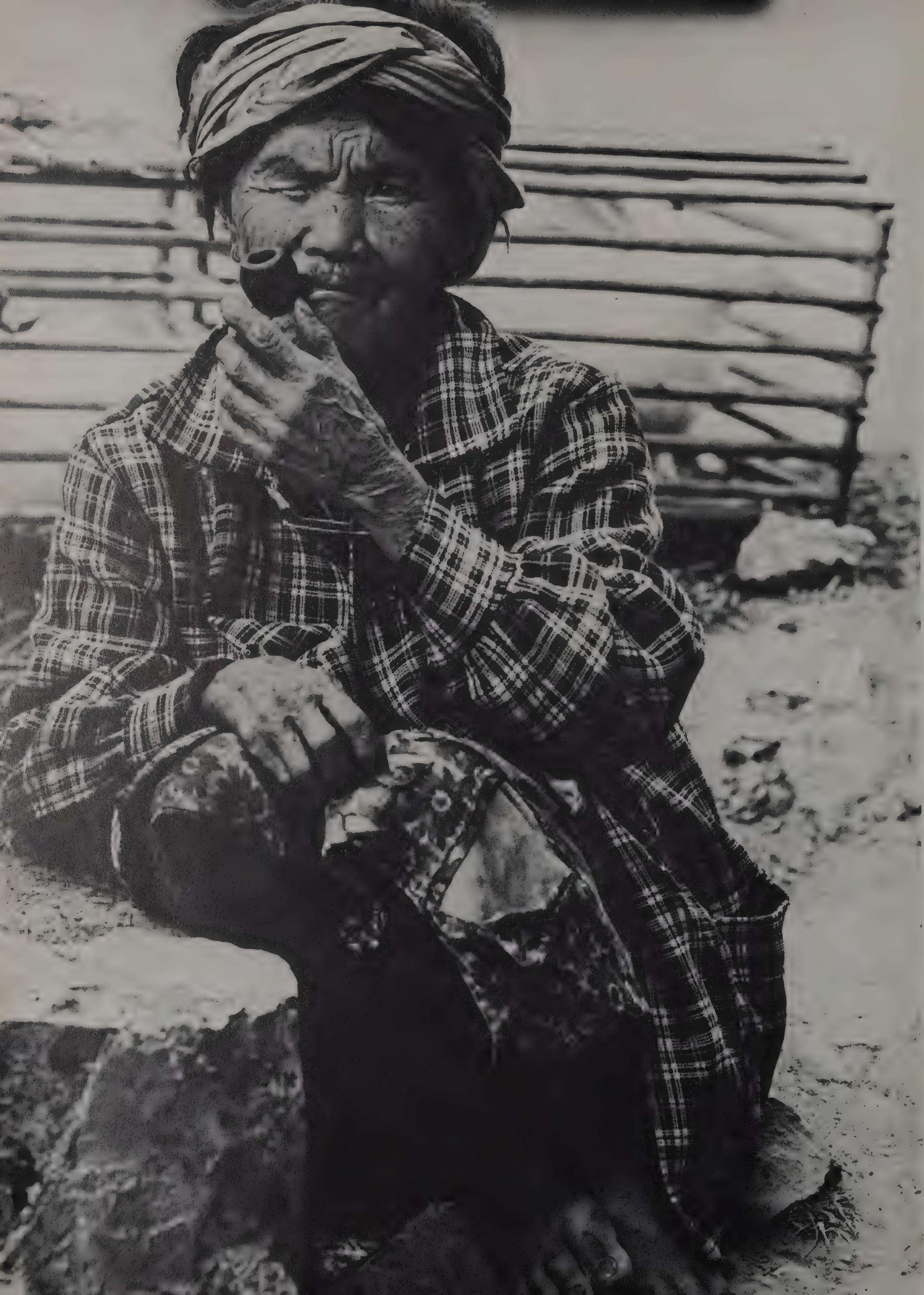

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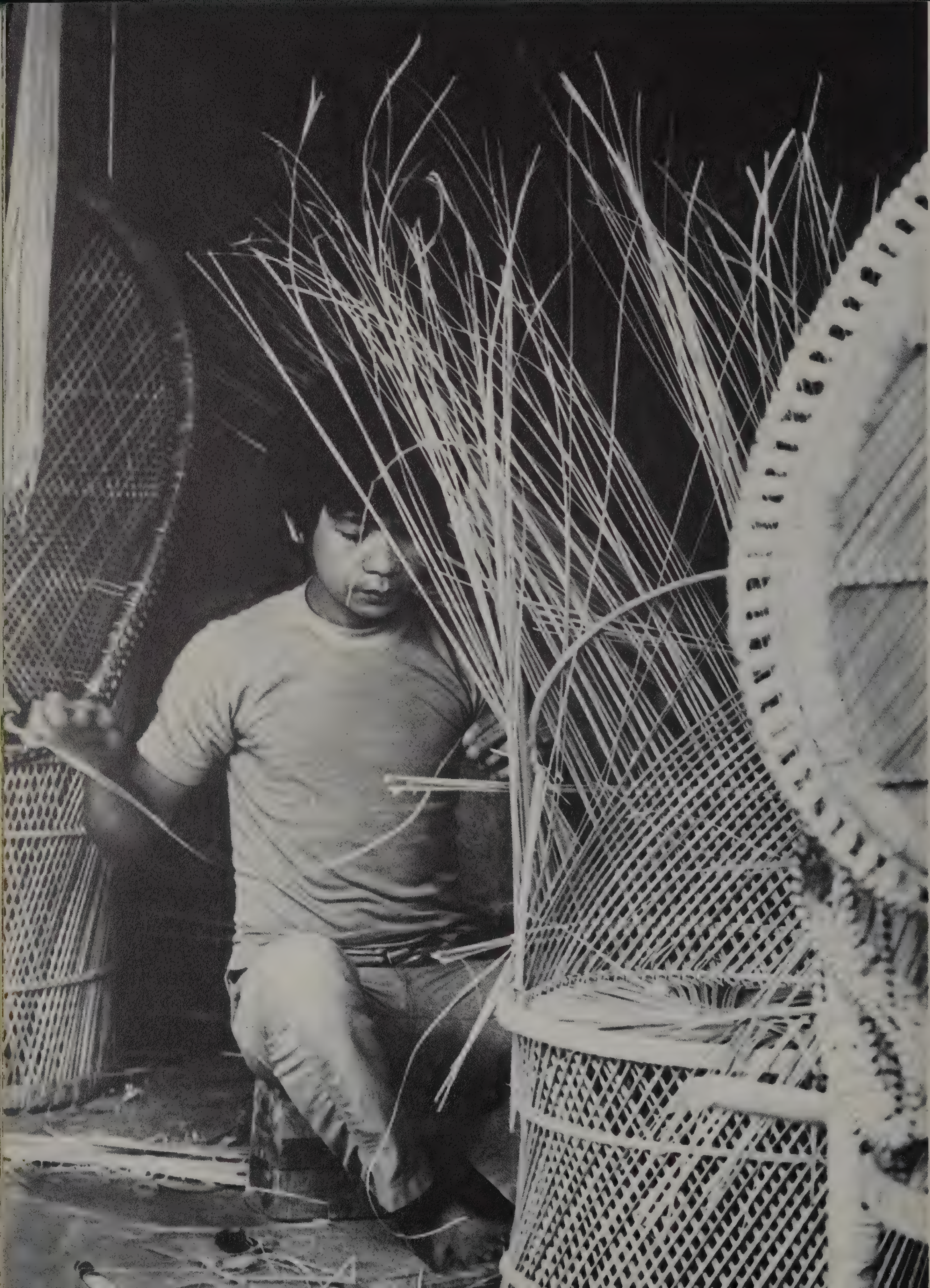

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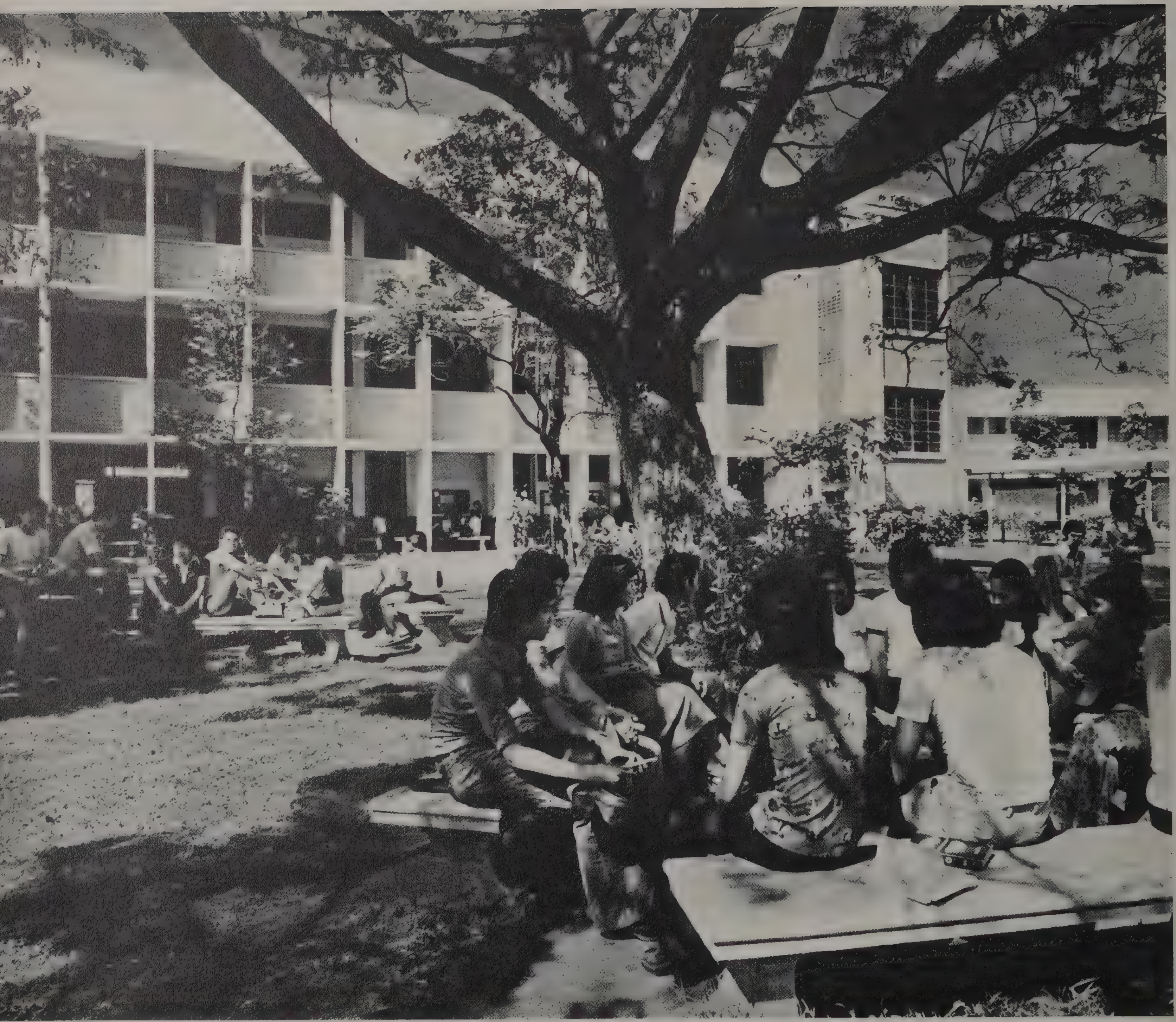

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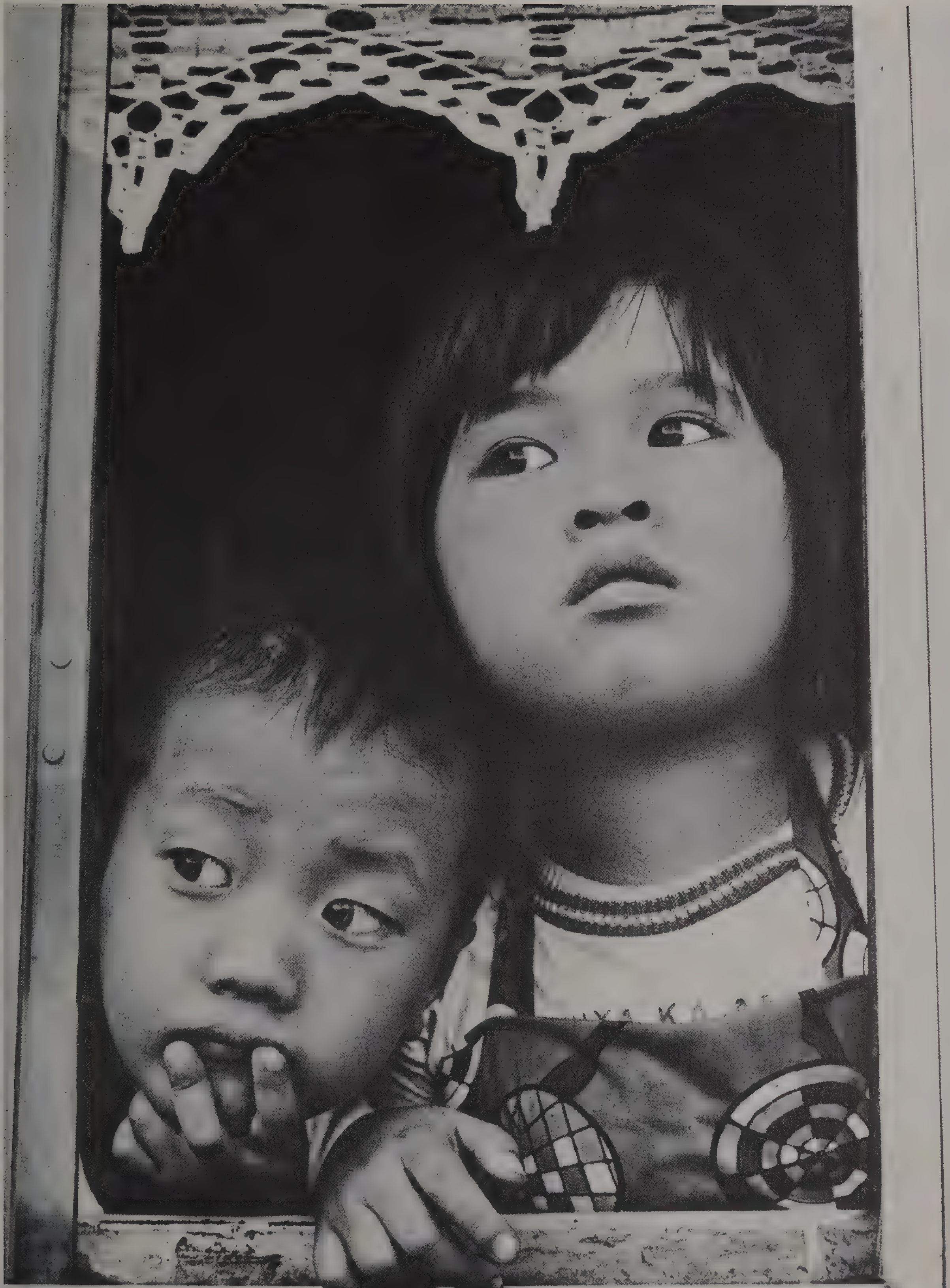

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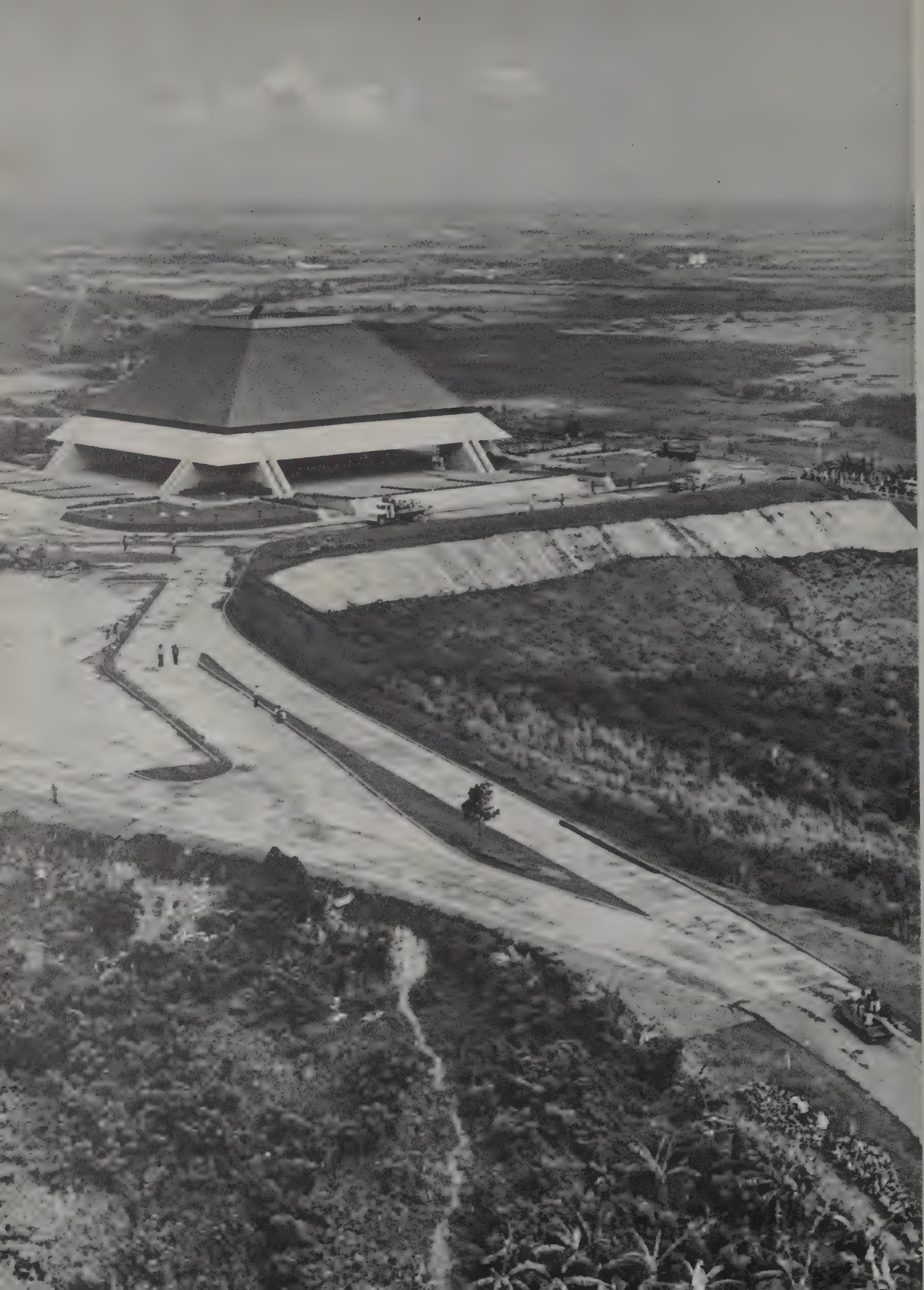

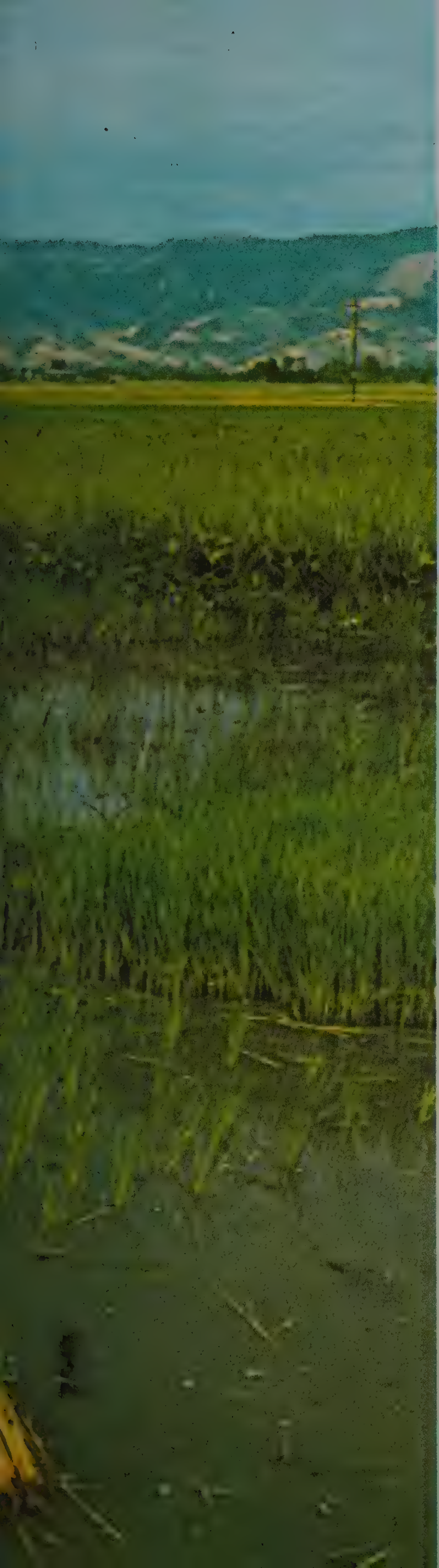

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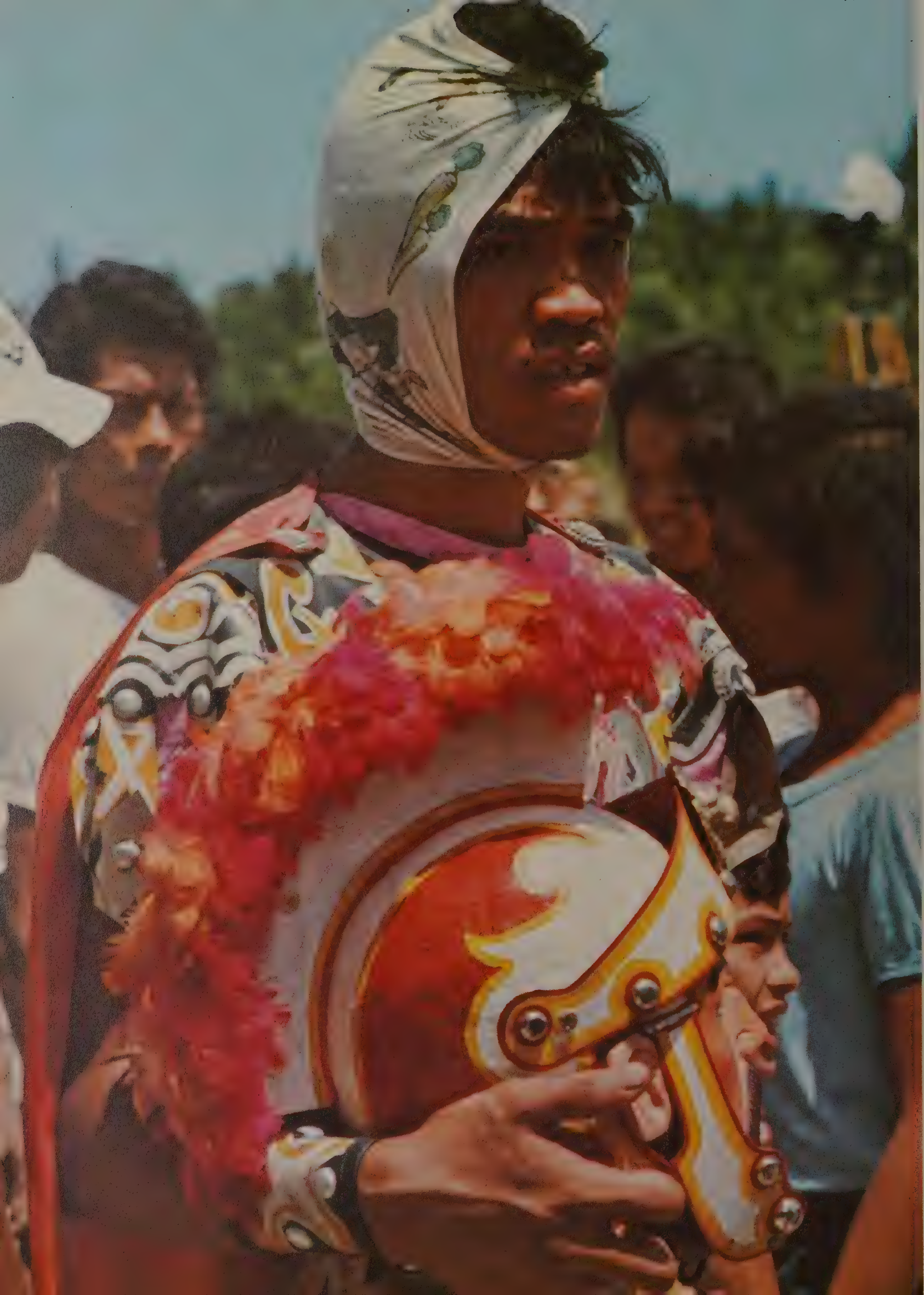
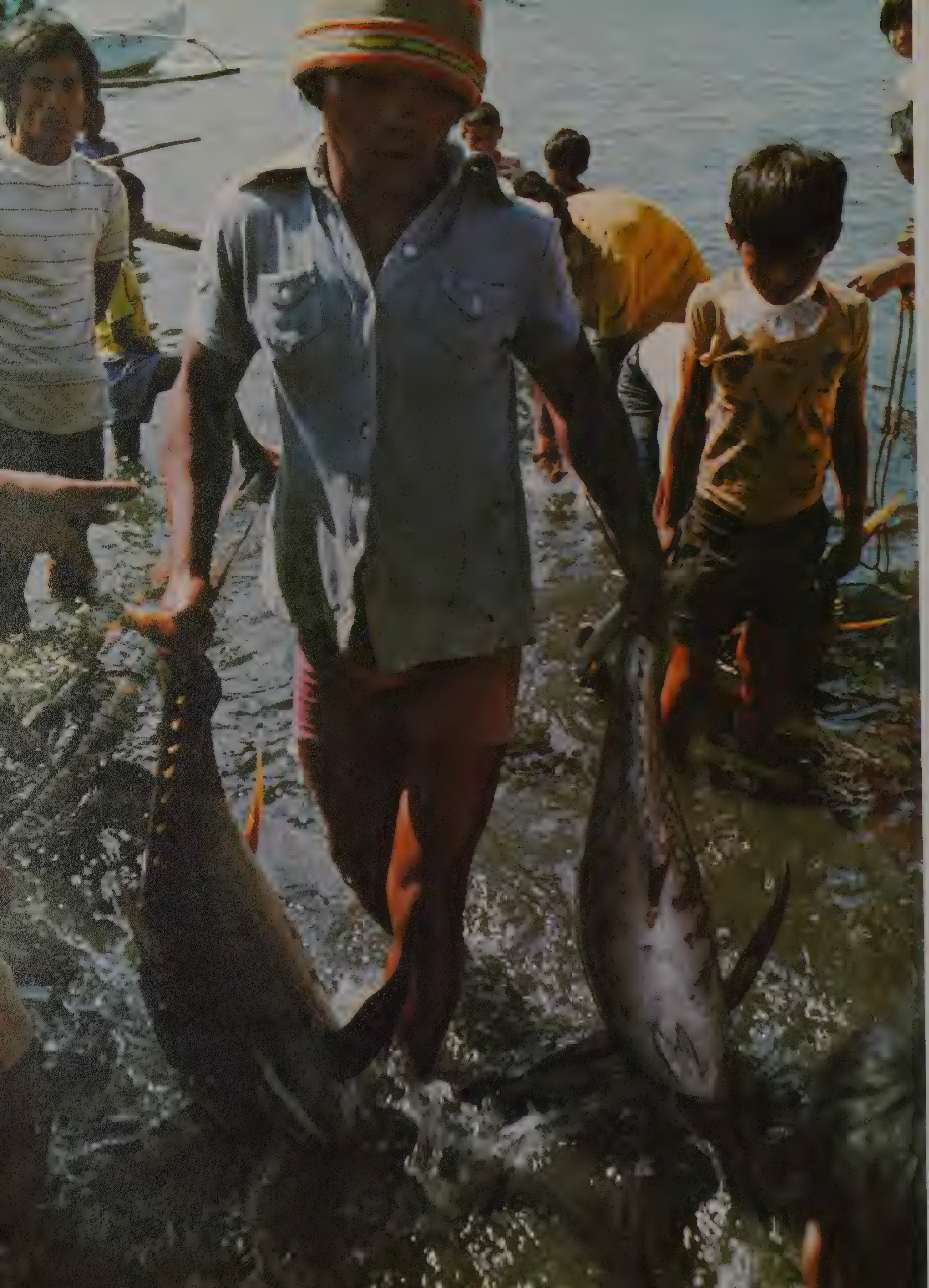
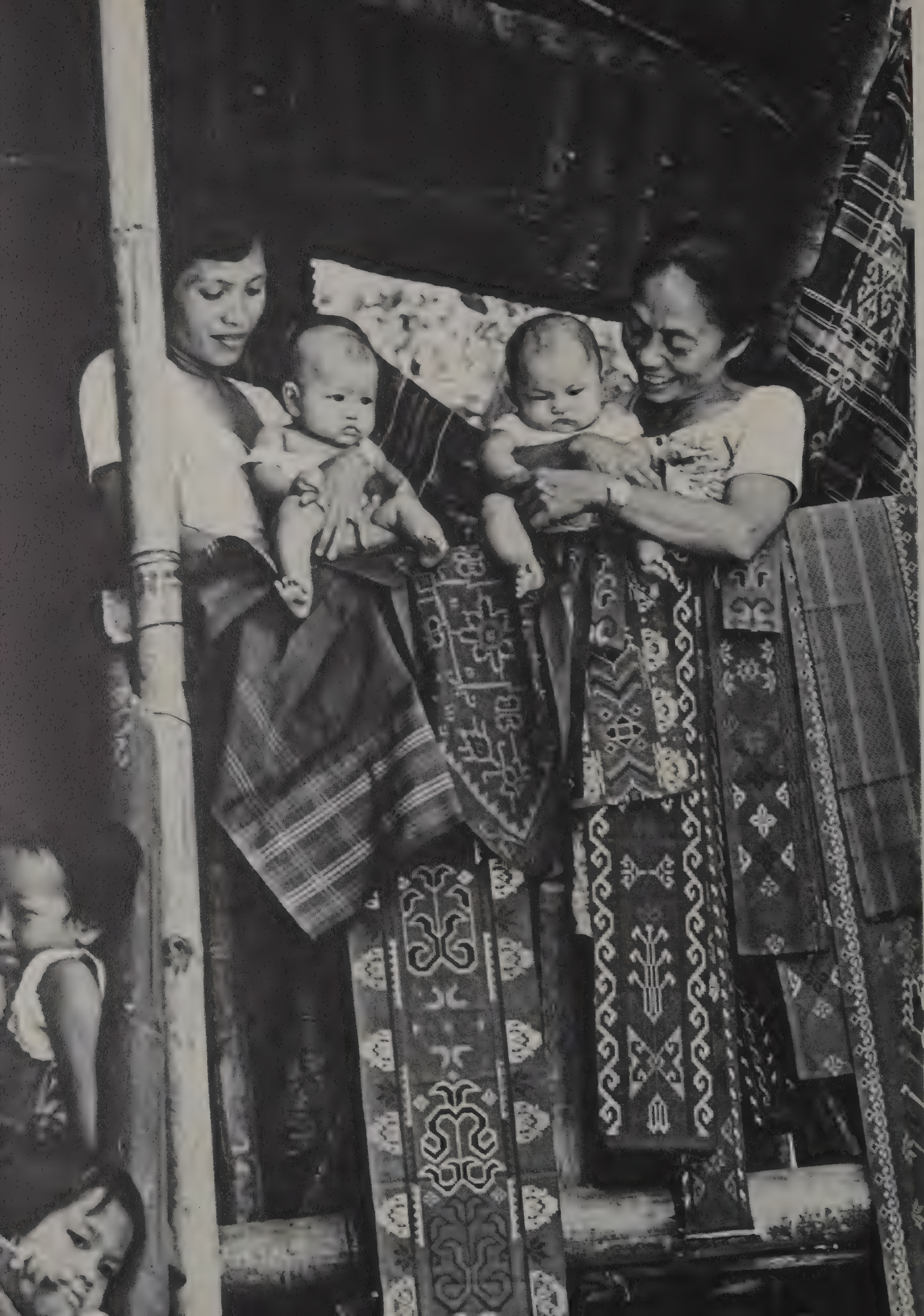
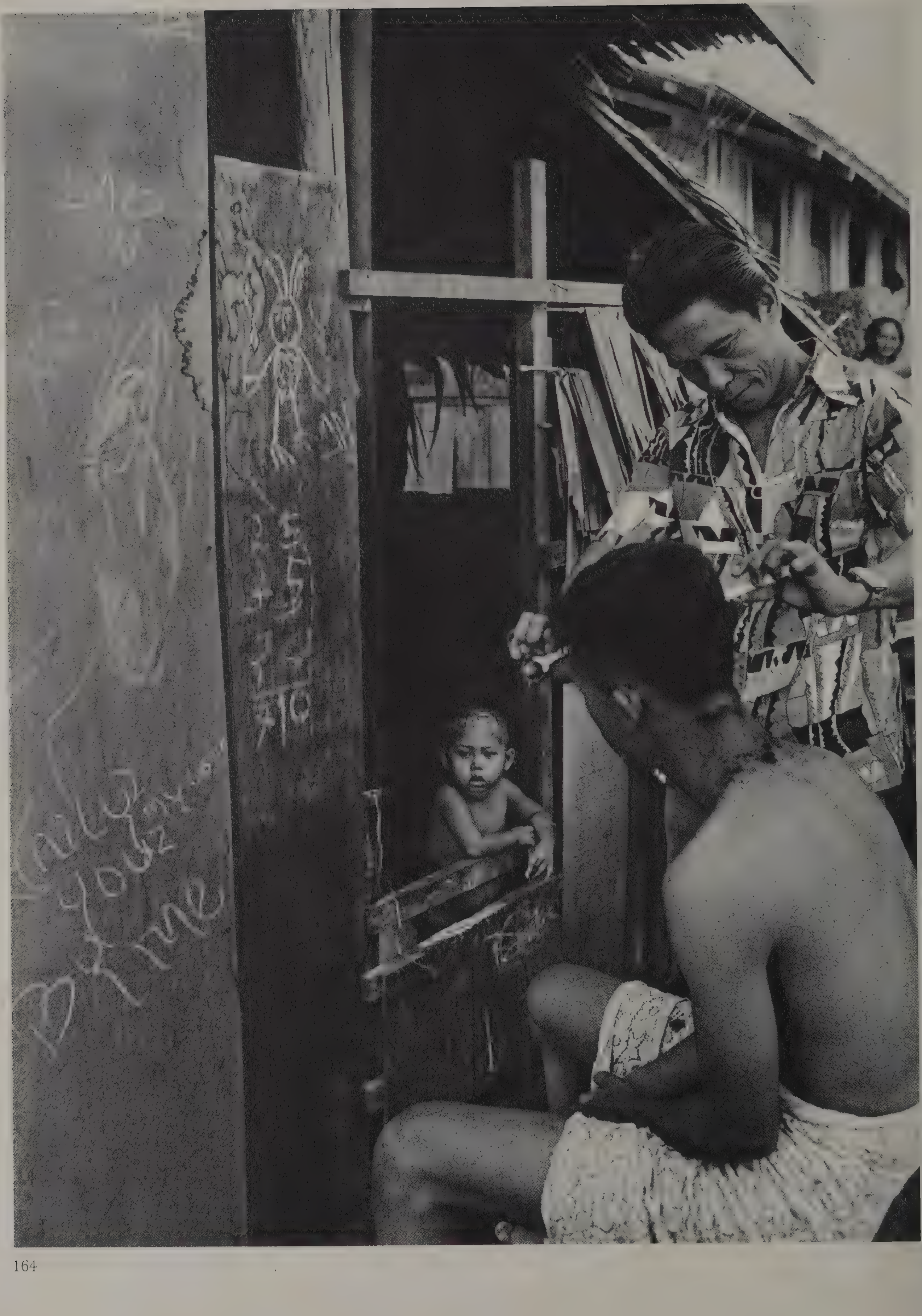
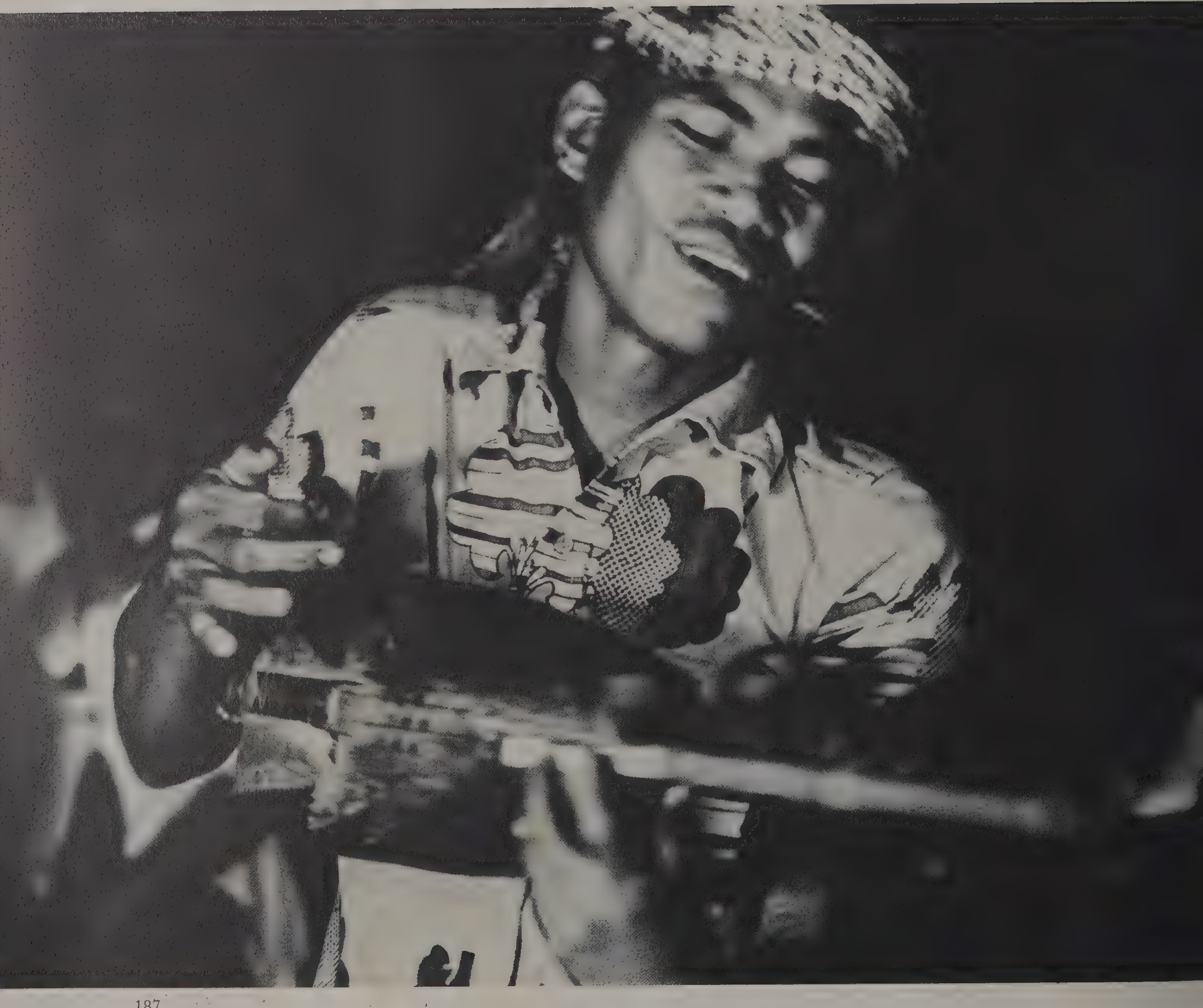
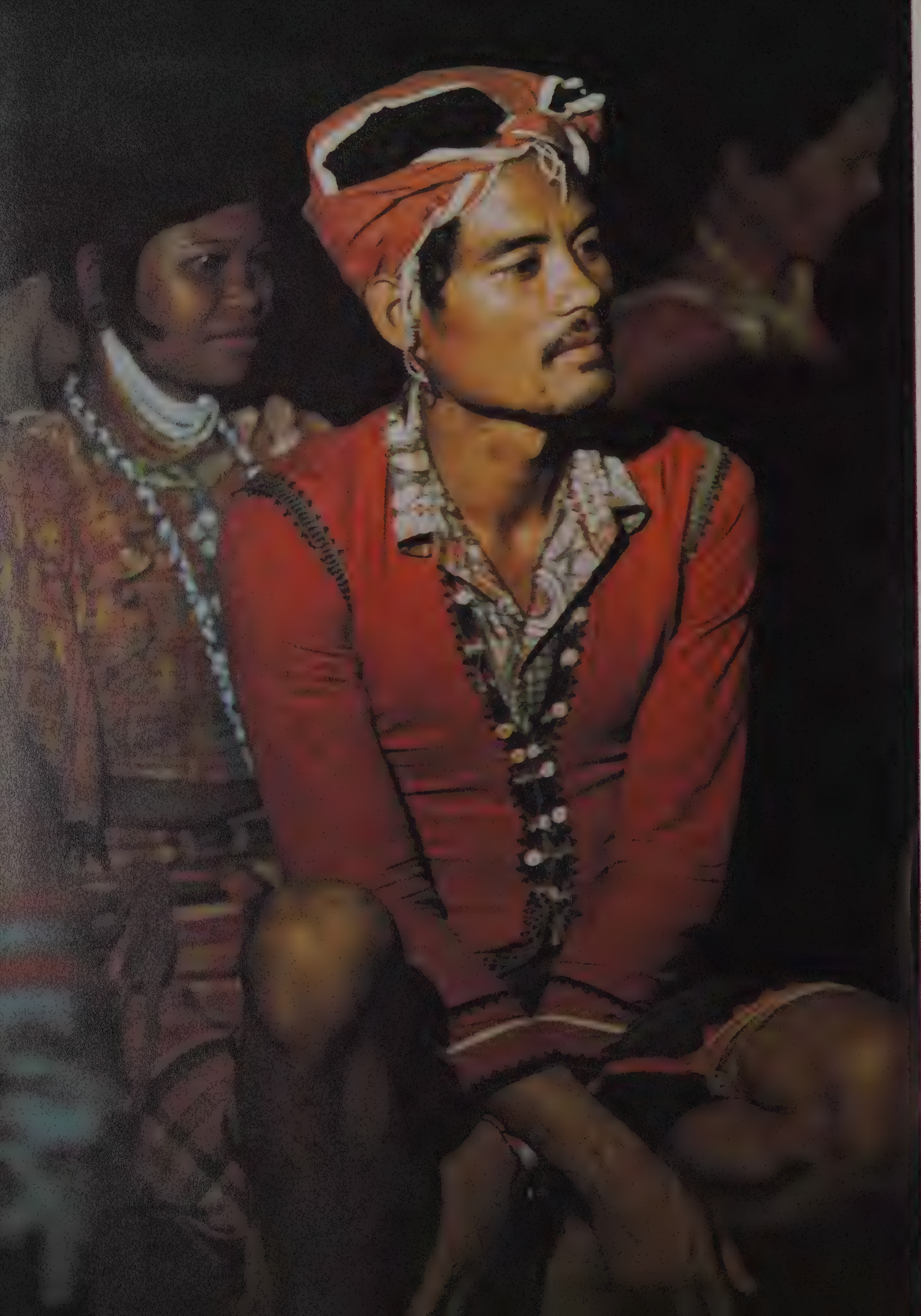


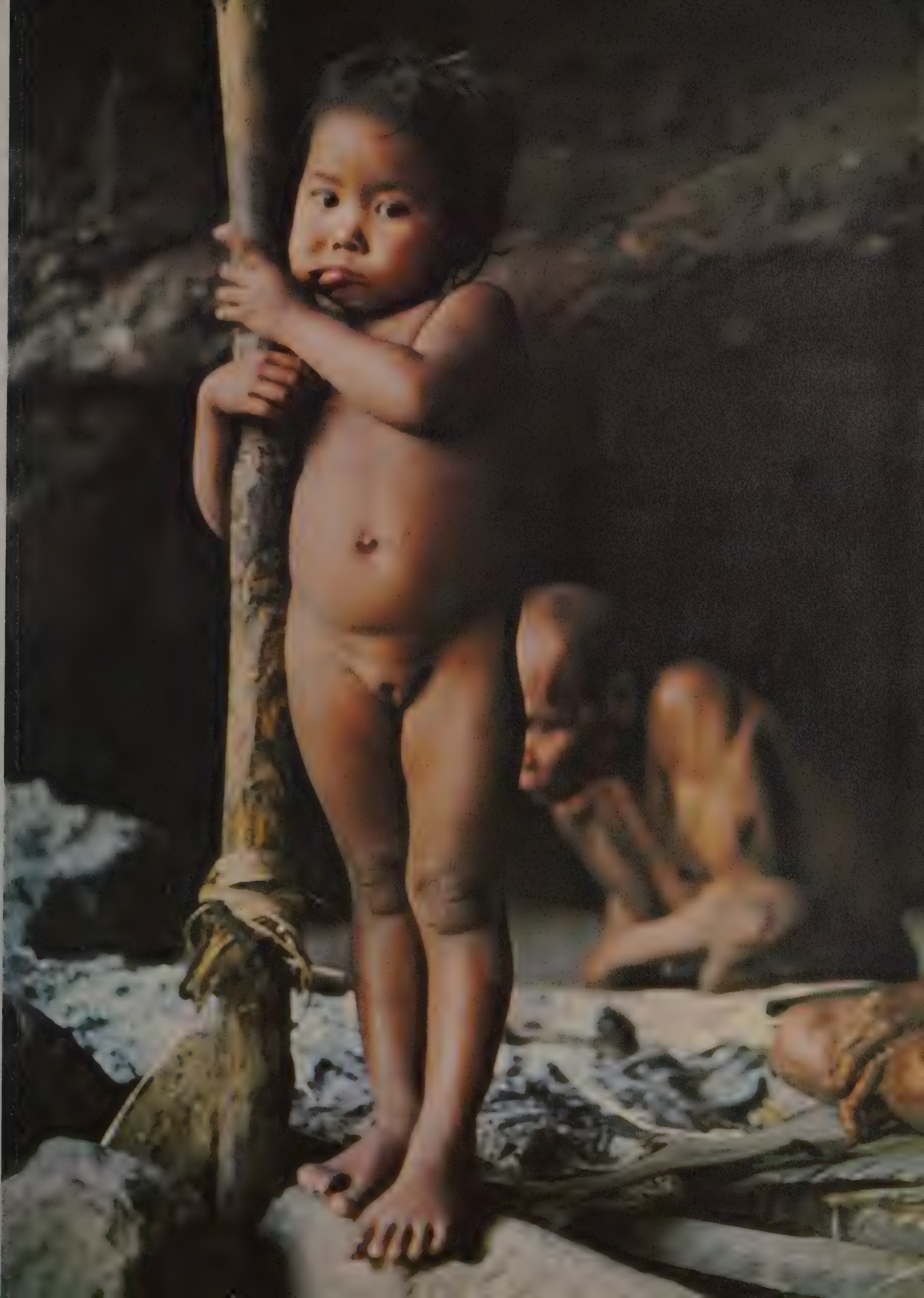












A PLACE TO LOVE

When I think of the Philippines, my mind's eye explodes with color. The wealth and range of colors in that land is unbelievable. I could do a whole book on the different colors of rice alone, the tender yellow-green of rice seedlings, the sharp, pure green of a field of young rice, the blue-gray green of a ricefield in the shade, the dark lace of a paddy seen from an airplane.

There is so much color around them, bright, vivid, vibrant color, in the flowers, in the birds, the butterflies, the fishes and the corals in the sea, that the people reflect this richness in their clothes, their umbrellas, their handicrafts, their folk art with its unique contemporary expression, the jeepney in all its gaudy glory.

The countryside sparkles with color. There is so much beauty I could cry. The trees, the beaches of sand as white as sugar, the play of sunlight on the water. Oh! there is so much to see.

Of all the places I visited I specially liked Laguna, a province just south of Manila. It has a great lake, dark, mysterious mountains and deep, hidden valleys, coconut plantations, sugarcane fields, hot-water springs, waterfalls, and lovely towns. I also liked Vigan, a quaint town in northern Luzon that looks very Spanish; and in the southern Philippines, in the island of Mindanao, the cities of Zamboanga and Marawi, which could be Arabia, with mosques and brass gongs and schoolgirls in Muslim *malong*. I am grateful to the Maranao sultanate that awarded me the highest honorary title of "Bai Labi Agaus" (Queen of Plenty).

And of all the ethnic groups scattered over the country north to south, I was most fascinated by the T'boli of Southern Cotabato. They live in rugged, inaccessible country and they are often threatened by the modern townspeople and frontier adventurers around them. But they are beautiful, original people. They look like live paintings and their women are like dolls. They are perhaps the prettiest women in the Philippines, so tiny and slender and lady-like, with a multitude of rings on every finger and halfway round their earlobes. They wear girdles and necklaces of colored beads, and dress their hair elaborately, with fringes and falls, combs and ornamented pins. Oh! and their made-up eyes and lips — exactly like models, only they have been doing it for centuries. They're delightful.

But my most moving experience in the Philippines was my visit of a few hours with the Tasaday, who became world-famous when first discovered by the modern world a few years ago.

at the airport.

... surprised by the high tide.

enjoyng the national dance.

It is still difficult to get to their cave home deep in the rain forest of Southern Cotabato. And one must coordinate well in advance with the PANAMIN, the government agency which guards them jealously from unnecessary intrusions.

In the beginning, before I saw the Tasaday, I had felt it was wrong to simply keep them as they were found, deprived of what we have. But they have something far better than what we have. Seeing them was like going back to reality, after the illusions of civilization. For the Tasaday simply radiate the happiness that we in the civilized world are always looking for and cannot find. They radiate goodness and affection.

I was told that if they touch you, it means they like you. They must have liked me then, because they were always touching me, especially my hair. And they were always hugging each other spontaneously, the children particularly.

Oh! those children — all so handsome and brown, always smiling, always showing off the things they could do, anything to please the guest. Sing, climb up trees, swing on a vine, make a fire. They were curious about my earrings, my belt, my hat. Everyone tried the hat on, but they have no word for hat, so they called it "a cave for the head". I was sorry it's against the rules to give them anything, lest they are spoiled. I would have loved to leave them my hat.

They even learned to say my name and kept saying, "Gina, Gina," for they had been told that I was the sister of their *Tau Bung*, "the white man who came from the sky," as they call PANAMIN's Manda Elizalde, whom they regard as a patriarch.

I was so moved by the simple purity and sweetness of these people, this little band of less than 30, that I almost could not take photographs. And I told myself that if I came back to the Philippines, I would like to see my friends, the Tasaday, again.

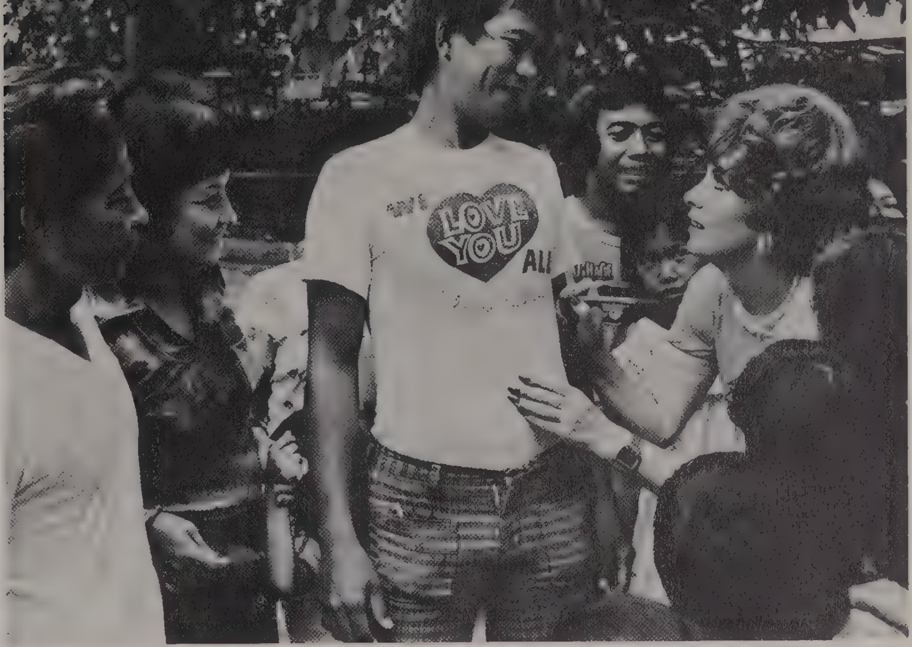
Except in the rain forest, a common feature of daily life I saw everywhere in the Philippines was cockfighting. Every town has a cockpit, but even in the villages, any open space becomes an instant arena. All week, the men groom, handle and train their fighting roosters like movie stars or boxing champions. And on Sunday, the cockpits are jammed with sportsmen and bettors.

Cockfights are splendid sporting events — even more than bullfights. I have never seen animals as brave and as ferocious as fighting cocks. They become fiercer when they are wounded, and the more they are gashed, the more courageous they get. They never give up but fight the opponent to the last breath. They are magnificent birds!

Getting to know the Filipinos in their own milieu has been an enriching human experience. Filipinos are cousins to Italians. Like us, they are imaginative and impulsive, gay and passionate, sensitive and volatile. But at the same time, there is something mysterious in their nature, an indefinable *je-ne-sais-quoi* which I cannot put a finger on. They are Orientals, but Occidentals too. It's an interesting combination of East and West, and it makes them different from any other people.

I hope that, in this book, the Filipinos will recognize themselves and that my other readers and friends all over the world will enjoy the photographs I have put together, photographs of a land and a people that I shall always think of with great affection and love.

Gina Lollobrigida



with a Filipino admirer.

the warm welcome of the gentle Tasaday.

with the President Marcos and Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos.

Photo of Miss. Lollobrigida by Renato Vacatello

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Publication supervised by
Salani Publishing House, Italy.
Photo-engraving and printing by
La Zincografica Fiorentina.
Italy, 1976.

For millions of men, she is still « La Bersagliera » or the splendid star of « Buona Sera, Mrs. Campbell ».

Nowadays, Gina is deeply involved in photography and journalism, travelling widely in search of new images and experiences.

From the other side of the camera lens, Gina now looks out on the world, observing and examining us in her new role as photographic witness of our time.

In her images we find the same joy in life, imagination and inspiration of the women she played so successfully on the screen.

After « Italia mia », an international success published in almost every language, Gina now looks at the Philippines. By « entering into the heart of things », as she explains it, she conveys the portrait of a fascinating, emerging country, and of Manila, an ever-changing and vital city. These two portraits were constructed from images sought, chosen, and sometimes suffered by an attentive and sensitive photographer who enjoys a unique relationship with the camera, and with her readers.

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